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G12-2175 Animal Care Resource Guide for 4-H and FFA Members: Knowing the Livestock Lingo

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NebGuide

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Animal Care Resource Guide for 4-H and FFA Members

Knowing the Livestock Lingo

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There are many terms associated with livestock production that may be unfamiliar to youth. This NebGuide lists and defines terms common between species and specific to certain species. This is No. 4 in a series of five resource guides.

There may be terms or language used in livestock and poultry production that may be unfamiliar to you. The terms may be specific to certain species or may be similar across species. Below is a list of common words and terms related to breeding and reproduction, health and well-being, feed and nutrition, beef and dairy cattle, swine, sheep, meat and dairy goats, rabbits, poultry, and horses.

General Terminology	
Herd	A grouping of a species of animals (cattle, swine, goats)
Flock	A grouping of a species of animals (sheep, poultry)
Litter	Multiple offspring produced at one birth by a multiparous mammal
Multiparous	Having given birth more than one time
Primiparous	Having given birth once
Gestation length	The amount of time an animal is pregnant; lengths will vary by breed and individual animal
Breed	A group of animals that, as a result of breeding and selection, have certain distinguishable characteristics
Breeding animal	Livestock bred and raised to be included in a reproductive program
Market animal	Livestock bred and raised for food consumption
Weaned	An offspring that is removed from the care of its sire and dam
Weanling	An animal that is no longer nursing
Yearling	An animal that is 1 to 2 years of age
Harvest	To slaughter an animal for human consumption
Bulling	When one animal is riding another animal; may cause physical and health problems to the animal being ridden
Breeding and Reproduction	
Sire	A male parent
Dam	A female parent
Artificial Insemination (AI)	Introduction of semen into the vagina or uterus using technology rather than by sexual contact between animals
Embryo	An organism in its early stages of development, especially before it has reached a distinctively recognizable form
Ovary	Female reproductive organ that produces ova and, in vertebrates, estrogen and progesterone
Ovulation	To produce ova; discharge eggs from the ovary
Testicle	Male reproductive organ that produces testosterone
Castrate	The alteration of a male animal's reproductive system that renders it infertile
Intact	A male animal that is unaltered and therefore capable of reproducing; uncastrated
Gestation	Duration of pregnancy; the period of development in the uterus from conception until birth
Lactation	The period during which mammary glands secrete milk
Puberty	When an animal's reproductive system begins to function; varies by species, breed, age, and weight of animals
Estrus (heat)	When a female is receptive to a male for mating
Estrous (heat) cycle	Physiological changes that occur in mammalian females which are controlled by hormones and used for the maturation of and release of follicles from the ovary

Signs of estrus (In-heat)	If an animal is in-heat, she may: stand for other animals to ride her, try to ride other animals, have loss of appetite, sniff and smell the air, act nervous and restless, experience increase in mucous discharge from the vulva, and vulva may be red and swollen
Heat check	Watching for signs of estrus
Synchronization	Manipulating the estrus cycle of breeding females so they can be bred at approximately the same time
K-Mar	Heat detection device that is a capsule of red dye glued to the tailhead. When the animal is mounted, the capsule breaks, indicating that she may be in heat.
CIDR Devices	Devices containing the progesterone hormone, which is placed intravaginally to release progesterone at a controlled rate into the blood stream. Animals will come into heat several days after the devices have been removed.
Early maturing	Female reaches mature size at a younger age
Later maturing	Female reaches mature size at an older age
Health and Well-Being	
Vaccinate	To inoculate with a vaccine in order to produce immunity to an infection or disease
Polled	A naturally hornless animal
Horned	An animal with horns
De-horning	Removal of horns from animals when they are young, making them easier to handle and less likely to injure each other and human handlers
Docking	The removal of the majority of the tail, leaving a small portion closest to the body
Gummers/Broken mouth	These are usually animals that are advanced in age, but may also be animals that have eaten off of a dirt pen floor where they may chew rocks, thus breaking their teeth. These animals may need additional or easier to consume feed products.
Withdrawal time	The amount of time necessary for an animal to metabolize an administered product and the amount of time necessary for the product concentration level in the tissues to decrease to a safe, acceptable level for possible human consumption
Residues	The remainder of a drug in the tissue of an animal before the withdrawal time has been met
Pull rate	The amount of animals individually pulled out of a larger group of animals in which individual care or treatment is provided
Feed and Nutrition	
On-feed	An animal that is consuming its ration of feed normally
Off-feed	When an animal's consumption of feed decreases or stops. This may indicate the animal does not feel well or that there is something wrong with the feed.
Cud	A bolus of forage material that a ruminant animal regurgitates to be chewed again
Ruminant	Animals that have a stomach with four-compartments that consume forages and regurgitate their cud to break it down so they can break it down and absorb the nutrients. Some ruminant animals include cattle, sheep, goats, llamas, and deer.
Rumination	The process of a ruminant animal regurgitating their cud, and chewing it again to facilitate proper breakdown of cellulose rich plant material
Monogastric	Single stomach chamber; able to digest limited fibrous material. Examples of monogastrics include swine, horses, rabbits, cats, dogs, and humans.
Ad Lib	Also known as free choice; sufficient feed is made available at all times to enable the animal to eat as much as it can eat
Amino acids	Building blocks of protein, contains nitrogen
Animal Protein Product (APP)	The protein ingredient made from meat, bone meal, carcasses, blood, feathers, and/or fish that is treated at very high temperatures.
As fed basis	Weight of the feed or ingredient including moisture (water) content
Balanced ration	A balanced ration must contain the five essential elements — water, protein, energy, vitamins, and minerals — in the proper amount and ratios for the species being fed and for the maintenance of that animal (i.e., egg production, body maintenance, desired growth)
Complete feed	A ration that provides all the nutrients required. This generally can be purchased or made locally.
Daily feed intake	Amount of feed consumed in a day
Deficient/Deficiencies	Short or lacking certain nutrients
Digestible	Term given to feedstuffs that can be broken down and absorbed in the gastrointestinal (GI) tract
Dry matter	The portion of feed remaining after removal of moisture
Dry feeds	Feeds that are approximately 90 percent dry matter; usually hay and pellets
Feeding rate	The amount in pounds or kilos that a specific feed must be fed per day or per animal
Indigestible	Term given to feedstuffs that cannot be broken down and absorbed in the gastrointestinal (GI) tract
IU/International Units	A unit used to measure the effect of many vitamins and minerals
Limit Fed	Not allowing an animal to be fed to satisfy its appetite
Macro minerals/Major minerals	Minerals such as calcium and phosphorous that are included in a ration in relatively large amounts; usually measured in grams/day or percentage
Trace minerals/Minor minerals	Minerals such as copper and zinc that are included in a ration in very small amounts. Usually measured in parts per million or 1/1000 of a gram fractions of a milligram per head per day
Nutrients	Items such as protein, fat, fiber, energy, minerals, trace minerals, and vitamins
Ration	The amount of feed given to an animal in a 24-hour period; determine ration based on weight, age, and nutritional needs of the animal
Roughage	Course, dense plant-based material; hay
Wet feeds	Fresh grass or silage; ingredients with a high moisture content

Residue	What remains of a plant in a field after harvest
Harvest	To remove all grains or crop from a field, leaving residue
Beef and Dairy Cattle	
Bovine	Scientific name for cattle
Beef animal	Cattle developed for the production of red meat
Dairy animal	Cattle developed for the production of milk
Dual Purpose	Cattle developed for the production of both meat and milk
Gestation length	9 months (approximately 285 days)
Bull	Sexually mature male
Steer	Castrated male
Cow	Mature female
Heifer	Young female that has not yet had a calf
Calf	Young offspring; sexually immature
Beef	Generic term for cattle; meat from cattle
Junior calf	An age classification used to separate calves into classes at fairs and exhibitions. These are younger calves.
Senior calf	An age classification used to separate calves into classes at fairs and exhibitions. These are older calves.
Bos indicus	Cattle developed to tolerate hot, humid climates and generally have a hump on their necks, large ears, and thick skin. These cattle are well equipped to handle dry weather, heat, humidity, and insects. Breeds may include Brahman and Santa Gertrudis.
Bos taurus	British and Continental breeds of cattle. Cattle developed for the production of meat and/or milk. These cattle generally do not have humps on their necks, have short ears, and are thicker skinned. These cattle are better equipped to handle cold and wet climates. Breeds typically include Angus, Hereford, Charolais, and many others.
British breeds	Breeds developed in the British Isles and brought to the U.S. in the late 1700s and early 1800s. When compared to the Continental breeds, these breeds are smaller in mature size, reach mature size at an earlier age, have less growth potential, excel in fertility and calving ease, attain higher quality grades, and yield carcasses with a lower percentage of salable product. These breeds include Angus (red and black), Hereford (horned and polled), and Shorthorn.
Continental breeds	These breeds are newer to the U.S., being imported in the late 1960s and early 1970s, primarily to improve growth rate and leanness of existing breeds. These breeds are generally larger in mature size, are later maturing, produce carcasses with less fat and a higher percentage of saleable product, and lower quality grades. Commonly referred to as “exotic” breeds, and includes Charolais, Chianina, Gelbvieh, Limousin, Maine Anjou, Salers, and Simmental.
Backgrounding	A system that grows calves to enter a feedlot
Swine	
Porcine	Scientific name for swine
Boar	Sexually mature male
Barrow	Castrated male
Sow	Mature female
Gilt	Young female
Litter	Multiple offspring produced during one birth
Gestation length	3 months, 3 weeks, 3 days (approximately 114 days)
Piglet	Young offspring; sexually immature, (aka Pig)
Hog	A mature swine
Pork	Meat from swine
Sheep	
Ovine	Scientific name for sheep
Ram, Buck	Sexually mature male
Wether	Castrated male
Ewe	Female sheep
Gestation length	5 months (approximately 150 days)
Mutton	Meat of a mature sheep
Lamb	A sheep less than 1 year of age; meat from young sheep
Meat and Dairy Goats	
Caprine	Animals in the goat family
Buck, Billy	Sexually mature male
Wether	Castrated male
Doe, Nanny	Female goat
Doeling	Young female goat; sexually immature
Buckling	Young male goat; sexually immature
Kid	Young offspring; sexually immature
Gestation length	5 months (approximately 150 days)

Rabbit	
Leporidae	Scientific name for rabbits
Buck	Male rabbit
Doe	Female rabbit
Kit, Kitten	Young rabbit
Gestation length	1 month (approximately 30 days)
Poultry (chickens, geese, ducks, turkeys)	
Aves	Scientific name for birds
Cock, Cockerel, Rooster	Adult male chicken
Capon	Castrated rooster
Hen	Adult female chicken and turkey
Chick	Newly hatched or very young chicken
Pullet	Young domestic hen, usually less than 1 year old
Broiler	A chicken that is 6 to 13 weeks of age used for meat production
Gander	Adult male goose
Goose	Mature female goose
Gosling	Offspring of geese
Drake	Adult male duck
Duck	Mature female duck
Duckling	Young offspring of ducks
Tom	Adult male turkey
Poult	Young fowl, especially a turkey, chicken, or pheasant
Incubation	The act of warming eggs in order for them to hatch; a mechanical replacement (i.e., incubator) for a hen sitting on her eggs
Embryology	The scientific study of embryos and their development
Gestation length – Chicken	21 days
Gestation length – Duck	23-29 days
Gestation length – Goose	29-31 days
Gestation length – Turkey	28 days
Horse	
Equine	Scientific name for horses
Stallion, Stud	Sexually mature male
Gelding	Castrated male
Mare, Dam	Female
Foal	Young offspring
Filly	Young female offspring (usually under 4 years of age)
Colt	Young male offspring (usually under 4 years of age)
Gestation length	11 months, 11 days (approximately 335 days)

Resources

For more information on animal care and well-being, visit *4h.unl.edu/resourceanimalcare* or contact:

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